

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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SUBJECT: YUGOSLAV PRESS REACTION

FOLLOWING IS FULL TEXT OF ARTICLE IN JULY 30

ZAGREB VJESNIK ENTITLED "WHAT DOES AMBASSADOR

SILBERMAN WANT?" BEGIN TEXT:

1. AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS THESE DAYS ABUNDANTLY AND UNSPARINGLY, IN SPACE AND IN TIME, HAVE WRITTEN ABOUT TWO AMERICANS WHOM FATE, AMBITIONS, POSITION, AND CHANCE BROUGHT TOGETHER IN AN UNUSUAL ALTHOUGH NOT COMPLETELY ILLOGICAL WAY. ONE, IF IT'S IMPORTANT, IS NAMED L. TOTH; THE OTHER, IT SHOULD BE NOTED, IS NAMED LAURENCE SILBERMAN. THE FIRST, WHO UNTIL A FEW YEARS AGO WAS ONLY A CITIZEN OF YUGOSLAVIA, WAS ARRESTED AND CONVICTED LAST YEAR FOR "INDUSTRIAL ESPIONAGE" (BBC). THE OTHER, FOR SOME TIME U.S. AMBASSADOR IN YUGOSLAVIA, WAS DIRECTLY CONCERNED WITH HIS IMPRISONED FELLOW CITIZEN (WHICH IS HIS RIGHT) AND DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY MADE A WHOLE TORRENT OF REPROACHES AGAINST US POLICY TOWARDS YUGOSLAVIA AND YUGOSLAV POLICY TOWARDS THE US IN GENERAL (WHICH ALREADY EXCEEDS CERTAIN LIMITS OF THE RULES OF DIPLOMATIC COURTESY).

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2. IF THE OCCASION IS ACCIDENTAL, THIS CANNOT BE THE MOMENT FOR IT. IF AMERICAN-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS ARE GOOD (AND, IT IS GOOD THAT THEY ARE GOOD) IN MANY AREAS DESPITE ALL THE KNOWN AND ACKNOWLEDGED DIFFERENCES IN POSITION AND POLICIES AND SYSTEM, THEN IT IS OBVIOUS THAT SOMEBODY IS TRYING TO WORSEN THEM, PRECISELY NOW--SEVERAL MONTHS BEFORE THE AMERICAN ELECTIONS (WHICH IS LESS IMPORTANT) AND SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE THE CONFERENCE OF THE NON-ALIGNED IN COLOMBO (WHICH ALREADY SHOWS THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE MEDDLING IN MATTERS WHICH ARE NONE OF THEIR BUSINESS). THE AMBASSADOR IS TAKING OUT AT SOMEBODY ELSE'S EXPENSE (AT THE EXPENSE OF THE COUNTRY TO WHICH HE IS ACCREDITED) HIS REAL OR IMAGINED DISAGREEMENTS WITH HIS MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, WHICH ALLEGEDLY DID NOT WORRY SUFFICIENTLY ABOUT AMERICAN INTERESTS IN YUGOSLAVIA (PERSONIFIED IN THE CONVICTED PERSON OF L. TOTH). THIS IS NOT THE RULE, NOT CUSTOMARY, AND NOT NICE.

3. AFTER EVERYTHING ENDED HAPPILY FOR THE CULPRIT HIMSELF--THE PARDONED L. TOTH RETURNED TO HIS NEW HOMELAND--HIS AMBASSADOR, INSTEAD OF RESTING SILENTLY ON HIS LAURELS, NOW SPEAKS OUT; AND AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS NOW LUSTILY WRITE AT LENGTH HOW THE STATE DEPARTMENT "HAMPERED HIS ONE-YEAR EFFORTS TO FREE" L. TOTH ALTHOUGH HE (THE AMBASSADOR) "ENJOYED THE SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT FORD AND MINISTER KISSINGER" (WASHINGTON POST). THEREFORE, "THE AMBASSADOR CONDEMNS BELGRADE AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT." HE CONDEMNS THE FIRST, OBVIOUSLY, BECAUSE IT DOES NOT BEHAVE TOWARD THE US AS ONE OF THE WESTERN ALLIES AND CONDUCTS ITS OWN INTERNAL AND FOREIGN POLICIES. HE CONDEMNS THE DEPARTMENT BECAUSE "HE PERHAPS CONSIDERS US POLICY TOWARD BELGRADE TOO CONCILIATORY" (AT LEAST AS IT IS SO CLAIMED AND WRITTEN BY THE NEW YORK TIMES CORRESPONDENT IN BELGRADE).

4. AMERICAN POLICY IS TOO CONCILIATORY, NEWSPAPERS SO INTERPRETED WHAT THE AMBASSADOR INTERPRETS, BECAUSE THE US "PERHAPS EVEN ERRS WHEN IT ENCOURAGES SO MUCH ECONOMIC AND OTHER FORMS OF COOPERATION WITH YUGOSLAVIA WHILE BELGRADE'S POLICIES AND PROPAGANDA ARE ALMOST IN EVERY AREA OF WORLD POLITICS BITTERLY AND OPENLY ANTI-AMERICAN." THEREFORE, "THE CASE OF L. TOTH IS A GOOD OCCASION TO CONSIDER AGAIN YUGOSLAV-AMERICAN RELATIONS." THEREFORE, "THE INCIDENT WITH TOTH DRAMATICALLY SHOWS THAT PROBLEMS IN YUGOSLAV-AMERICAN RELATIONS CAN NO LONGER BE PUT ASIDE."

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BECAUSE: "A LOT OF TIME HAS PASSED SINCE THERE WAS MUCH DISCUSSION ABOUT US POLICY TOWARD YUGOSLAVIA." THAT MEANS, NOW IS THE TIME--IF WE WELL UNDERSTAND THAT WHICH THE NEWSPAPERS AND PERHAPS THE AMBASSADOR ARE SUGGESTING--TO RENEW DISCUSSIONS AND POSSIBLY TO CHANGE POLICY.

5. THE POLEMICS--WITH NEWSPAPERS, WITH THE AMBASSADOR, OR WITH ANYONE ELSE--ARE NEEDLESS. IT IS NEEDLESS TO REPEAT A HUNDRED

TIMES THAT YUGOSLAV POLICY IS NOT ANTI-AMERICAN (AS IT IS NOT ANTI-SOVIET) NOR IS IT PRO-AMERICAN (OR PRO-SOVIET) ALTHOUGH IT OPENLY OPPOSES, WHEREVER THERE IS A REASON, ALL IMPERIALISTIC AND HEGEMONICAL BEHAVIOR. IT IS NEEDLESS BECAUSE, ACCORDING TO THE SILBERMAN-NEW YORK TIMES LOGIC, COOPERATION WITH YUGOSLAVIA IS ONLY POSSIBLE IF YUGOSLAVIA IS NO LONGER WHAT IT IS, AND THAT MEANS INDEPENDENT AND NON-ALIGNED. IF YUGOSLAVIA IS REPROACHED FOR "THE MANY ASPECTS OF YUGOSLAV POLICY, WHICH CONFLICT WITH US INTERESTS AND VALUES" AND WHICH "ALWAYS REFLECTS ON OUR RELATIONS," THEN YUGOSLAVIA DESERVES ECONOMIC AND OTHER US COOPERATION, ONLY AS AN ALLY, IF NOT TO SAY SATELLITE OF THE US.

6. AND THAT ALREADY SUGGESTS A POLICY WHEREBY, ROUGHLY, YUGOSLAVIA WOULD DESERVE AMERICAN SYMPATHY AND US BUSINESS ONLY IF A GOVERNMENT WITHOUT COMMUNISTS WERE FORMED IN BELGRADE. OR STILL MORE OPENLY, IT SUGGESTS AN ORDER OR CONDITIONS LIKE THOSE RECENTLY GIVEN TO ITALY BY THE WEST GERMAN CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT, AND NOT ONLY IN HIS NAME. IT IS THEREFORE WORTH NOTING THAT, WITH SUCH SCHMIDTIZING OR THIS KIND OF AMERICANIZATION, THEY DID NOT CALM THE SITUATION IN ITALY OR IN OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES-- AND YUGOSLAVIA IS NEITHER ITALY NOR THE WEST, NOR IS IT THE EAST, AND IT DOES NOT WANT TO BE EITHER IN ONE PLACE OR THE OTHER. ACCORDINGLY, NO ONE WHO IS REALISTIC CAN EXPECT TO CHANGE YUGOSLAVIA'S INDEPENDENT AND NON-ALIGNED POLICY. AND IF ONE CANNOT EXPECT THIS, THERE REMAINS THE LOGICAL QUESTION: WHY DEMAND IT?

7. THIS QUESTION COULD BEST BE ANSWERED BY THOSE WHO HAVE RECENTLY TRIED TO WORSEN THE CONDITIONS OF AMERICAN-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS. HERE IT WOULD BE WELL TO SUGGEST THAT AMBASSADORS ARE NOT HERE TO WORK AGAINST THE POLICIES OF THEIR GOVERNMENTS. IT ONLY REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER MR. SILBERMAN IN THIS REGARD IS THE EXCEPTION OR THE RULE, WHETHER IN THE END HE WILL BE DISAVOWED OR SUPPORTED.

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SUCH SUPPORT WOULD PERHAPS BE PART OF THE PRESSURE ON YUGOSLAVIA AND THOSE WHO ARE SIMILARLY "DISOBEDIENT", THOSE WHO DARE TO BEHAVE BOTH INDEPENDENTLY AND TOGETHER AT THE UN AND ELSEWHERE AND WHO ARE PREPARING THEMSELVES FOR TALKS IN COLOMBO, ALTHOUGH THAT IN NO WAY SUITS SOME WHO IN THE US STILL CONSIDER THAT THE WORLD SHOULD BE RULED ONLY BY THE GREAT. AND WITH THEM STAND THEIR MOST FAITHFUL AND THEIR RICHEST SUPPORTERS AS AGAINST SOME MISERABLE POOR ONES WHO WISH TO COOPERATE WITH THE US BUT DO NOT WANT AMERICAN "IDEAS."

CATHERMAN

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